

Holy Cross Catholic School Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition

Preamble

Whereas, children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, 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 activity, 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 US Department of Agriculture (myplate.org);

Thus, Holy Cross Catholic 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 Holy Cross Catholic School that:

- The school will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing school nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades PreK – 4 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.
- Nutrition education and physical education will be provided to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will reinforce the US Department of Agriculture recommendations on lunch nutrition.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

I. School Health Council

The Holy Cross Catholic School Advisory Council will also serve as a school wellness committee to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The wellness committee will serve as a resource for implementing those policies.

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

Meal Times and Scheduling: Holy Cross Catholic School:

- Will provide students with at least 20 minutes for lunch;
- Will serve lunch between 12:00 noon and 12:30 pm;
- Allows students to eat lunch during organizational meetings or activities scheduled during lunchtime;
- Provides access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before students eat meals or snacks;
- Accommodates tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (e.g. orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

Sharing of Foods and Beverages: Holy Cross Catholic School shall discourage children from sharing their food and beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

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. Holy Cross Catholic School will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations.

Holy Cross Catholic School will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel, and parents.

Celebrations. Holy Cross Catholic School shall limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Each party should consider the recommendations on myplate.org to incorporate healthy options for students. The school wellness committee may suggest healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion. Holy Cross Catholic School aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Nutrition education and nutrition promotion:

- 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 all classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, and social sciences;
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, 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);
- Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing;

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 compliment 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;
- Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

Communication with Parents. Holy Cross Catholic School shall support parent's efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The school will periodically send home nutrition information and nutrition tips in family folders. The school will encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages. The wellness committee will provide parents with a list of foods that meet the approved snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities. In addition, the wellness committee will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

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

Staff Wellness. Holy Cross Catholic 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 and Physical Education

Physical Education (P.E. PreK-4). All students in grades PreK-4 will receive physical education for the entire school year in accordance with Diocesan guidelines (60 minutes/week for grades PreK-4). 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 should spend at least 50% of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Daily Recess. All students (PreK-4) should have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which moderate to vigorous physical activity should be verbally encouraged. Space and equipment will be provided to facilitate this activity.

Extended periods (i.e., periods of 2 two or more hours) of inactivity should be discouraged. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for children to remain indoors for long periods of time, students should be given periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School. Information on participation in local extracurricular physical activity programs will be provided to students, as appropriate.

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.

Physical Activity and Punishment. Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use excessive physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment.

Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours. School spaces and facilities should be available to students, staff, and community members, before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations. These spaces and facilities should also be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

V. Other School-Based Activities

Sun Safety. “Sun Safety” describes a range of behaviors that include wearing appropriate clothing, applying sunscreen and limiting sun exposure. The sun safety program will focus on outdoor behavior and will be developmentally appropriate, active, engaging and taught in lessons that emphasize the positive benefits of sun safety. Sun safety education will be designed to assist students with:

1. Knowledge about the harmful effects of the sun and ways to protect skin.
2. Sun-safe skills, including the correct use of protective clothing, hats, sunglasses, sunscreen, and lip balm as well as seeking shade and limiting sun exposure when possible and practical during the hours of peak sun intensity.
3. Knowledge about how to assess personal sun safety habits, set goals for improvement and achieve these goals.

VI. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring. The principal will ensure compliance with established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies

Policy Review. The school will review the nutrition and physical activity policy; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The school will, as necessary, revise the wellness policy and administrative procedures.