**St. James Catholic School**

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**School Wellness Policy on Physical Activity and Nutrition**

**Preamble**

We believe that children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;

We believe that good health fosters student attendance and education;

We believe that community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Therefore, St. James 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 St. James 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-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.

 All students in grades PreK-8 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, St. James School will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the National School Lunch Program).

 The school will provide nutrition education and physical education to students at school, through the use of websites, or at Home and School meetings.

**Free and Reduced-priced Meals**. St. James School 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, the school utilizes electronic identification and payment systems; provides meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income; promotes the availability of school meals to all students.

**Meal times and Scheduling.** St. James School:

 Will provide students with 30 minutes after sitting down for lunch;

 Will schedule meal periods at appropriate times, *e.g.* Lunch is scheduled between 11:00 AM and 12:30PM;

 Will not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;

 Will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and

 Will 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 will include appropriate certification and/or training programs for the child school nutrition managers and cafeteria workers, according to the levels of responsibility.

**Sharing of Foods and Beverages.** St. James School will discourage 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, fundraisers, school stores, etc.)**

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

 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.

**Fund-raising Activities**. To support children’s health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fund-raising 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. St. James School will encourage fund-raising activities that promote physical activity. The school will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fund-raising 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 consideration. The school will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel, and parents.

**Rewards**. St. James School will not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

**Celebrations**. St. James School will limit celebrations that involve food during the school day. Each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages. The school will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

**School sponsored Events**. Events, such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances. 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.

**Communications with Parents**. St. James School will support parents’ efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The school will offer healthy eating seminars for parents (through home and school), send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips in the school newsletter, and provide nutrient analysis of school menus. St. James School will 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 school will provide parents a list of foods that meet the school’s snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fund-raising activities. In addition, the school will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

The school 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 the 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, St. James School 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. School-based marketing of brands promoting predominantly low-nutrition foods and beverages is prohibited. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low fat dairy products is encouraged.

**Staff Wellness**. St. James 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.) K-8**. All students in grades K-8, including students with special health-care needs, will receive physical education (or its equivalent of 60 minutes per week) for the entire school year. Student involvement in the other activities involving physical activities (*e.g.*, interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50% of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

**Daily Recess**. All PreK-8 school students will have at least 30 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which teachers should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

St. James School discourages extended periods (*i.e.*, periods of two or more hours) of inactivity.

**Policy Review**. To help with the initial development of the school’s wellness policy, St. James School will conduct a baseline assessment of the school’s existing nutrition and physical activity entitlements and policies. The results of those 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 will review the current 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 school will revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.