

ACADEMY 360 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

*Created 7/2017; Adapted from Denver Public Schools' Health & Wellness Policies
and The Alliance for A Healthier Generation's local wellness policy exemplar*

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Preamble

Academy 360 is a statewide leader in advocating for and modeling healthy schools best practices. We believe deeply that providing students with more opportunities to be physically, emotionally and mentally well at school will lead to greater academic success. Thus, we adhere to some of the best-recommended healthy school practices, backed by research and practice.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism and better performance on cognitive tasks.^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students.^{8,9,10} In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education and extracurricular activities – do better academically.^{11,12,13,14} Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance.^{15,16,17}

This policy outlines the school's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students at the school have access to healthy foods throughout the school day – both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus– in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of the school in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and

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- The school establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

This policy applies to all students and staff. Specific measurable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below.

Should you have questions relevant to Academy 360's wellness policy, please contact Becky McLean, Director of Wellness & Operations, at rebecca@academy-360.org or (720) 336-0320.

I. School Wellness Committee

Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Committee

The school will convene a representative wellness committee (hereto referred to as the WSCC committee) that meets at least four times per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of this wellness policy.

The WSCC committee membership will ideally represent teachers, staff, students, families and the community and will be responsible for setting goals and upholding the policies throughout the school. The lead administrator on the committee is the Director of Wellness & Operations.

II. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

The school will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions and timelines specific to each school; and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where and when; as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.

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Documentation maintained at the school will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public;
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements;

Annual Notification of Policy

The school will actively inform families and the public each year of basic information about this policy, including its content, any updates to the policy and implementation status. The school will make this information available via the website. The school will provide as much information as possible about the school nutrition environment. This will include a summary of the school's events or activities related to wellness policy implementation. Annually, the school will also publicize the name and contact information of the person leading and coordinating the committee, as well as information on how the public can get involved with the school wellness committee.

Progress Assessments

At least once every two years, the school will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy using Smart Source, student questionnaire, family questionnaire, or other.

The school will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum through the website.

III. Nutrition

School Meals

Our school is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams *trans* fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meeting the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

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Academy 360 participates in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Denver Public Schools' Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Snack Program. The school is also further developing its mini-farm to provide an additional source of food to complement its weekly No Cost Grocery Program on Thursdays. Academy 360 is committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students (including breakfast after the bell);
- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (The school offers reimbursable school meals that meet [USDA nutrition standards](#).)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using the following [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#):
 - Sliced or cut fruit is available daily.
 - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students.
 - All available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names.
 - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.
 - White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers.
 - Alternative entrée options (e.g., salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are highlighted on posters or signs within all service and dining areas.
 - A reimbursable meal can be created in any service area available to students (e.g., salad bars, snack rooms, etc.).
 - Menus will be posted on the school's website and will include nutrient content and ingredients.
- The nutrition program will accommodate students with special dietary needs.
- Students will be allowed at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes to eat lunch, counting from the time they have received their meal and are seated.
- Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.
- Lunch will follow the recess period to better support learning and healthy eating.
- Participation in Federal child nutrition programs will be promoted among students and families to help ensure that families know what programs are available in their children's school.
- Through DPS' Food & Nutrition Services, the school will implement the following Farm to School activities:
 - Local and/or regional products are incorporated into the school meal program;

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- Messages about agriculture and nutrition are reinforced throughout the learning environment;
- School hosts a school garden;

Sugar-Sweetened Beverages

Outside of the School Breakfast Program, no sugar-sweetened beverages, including Gatorade, are allowed at Academy 360. Students may consume water throughout the school day (see below).

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day. The school will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes.

- All water sources and containers will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene and health safety standards. Such sources and containers may include drinking fountains, water jugs, hydration stations, water jets and other methods for delivering drinking water.
- Students will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

Competitive Foods

The school is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus *during the school day* support healthy eating. The foods sold and served outside of the school meal programs (e.g., “competitive” foods and beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum. Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits. A summary of the standards and information, as well as a Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools are available at:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks>. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a set of tools to assist with implementation of Smart Snacks available at www.foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org.

In accordance with the Colorado Department of Education,

201.01 In those schools participating in the School Breakfast and/or National School

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Lunch Program(s), competitive food service is any food or beverage available to students that is separate from the school's nonprofit federally reimbursed food service program, and is provided by a school-approved organization or by a school-approved outside vendor.

201.02 Competitive food service, except as outlined in Section 201.03, shall not operate in competition with the district's food service program. Such competitive foods cannot be sold 30 minutes before to 30 minutes after each scheduled meal service on any area of the school campus that is accessible to students.

Celebrations and Rewards

All foods offered at Academy 360 will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards:

1. Celebrations and parties. Families are expected to follow the school's Food Policy (Appendix I). Healthy party ideas are available from the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) and from the [USDA](#).
2. Classroom snacks brought by families are expected to follow the school's food policy. Families can access ideas here - [list of foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks](#) nutrition standards.

Fundraising

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers.* The school will make available to families and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas [*examples from the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) and the [USDA](#)*].

- The school prefers the use of non-food fundraisers, and encourage those promoting physical activity (such as walk-a-thons, Jump Rope for Heart, fun runs, etc.).
- Fundraising during and outside school hours will sell only non-food items or foods and beverages that meet or exceed the Smart Snacks nutrition standards.

In alignment with Denver Public Schools, we will use the following guidelines for possible fundraisers -

https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/allfoods_fundraisers.pdf

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Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff, teachers, parents, students and the community.

The school will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through at least:

- Implementing at least ten or more evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#); and
- Ensuring 100% of foods and beverages promoted to students meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Additional promotion techniques that the school may use are available at <http://www.foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/>.

Nutrition Education

The school will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by all students. The school will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is 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 integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences and elective subjects;
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits and school gardens;
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);

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- Links with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, other school foods and nutrition-related community services;
- Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing; and
- Includes nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

The school will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 of the following essential topics on healthy eating:

- Relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Food guidance from [MyPlate](#)
- Reading and using FDA's nutrition fact labels
- Eating a variety of foods every day
- Balancing food intake and physical activity
- Eating more fruits, vegetables and whole grain products
- Choosing foods that are low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and do not contain *trans* fat
- Choosing foods and beverages with little added sugars
- Eating more calcium-rich foods
- Preparing healthy meals and snacks
- Risks of unhealthy weight control practices
- Accepting body size differences
- Food safety
- Importance of water consumption
- Importance of eating breakfast
- Making healthy choices when eating at restaurants
- Eating disorders
- [The Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#)
- Reducing sodium intake
- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to nutrition and dietary behavior
- How to develop a plan and track progress toward achieving a personal goal to eat healthfully
- Resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior
- Influencing, supporting, or advocating for others' healthy dietary behavior

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Food Rewards (all grades)¹

Academy 360 prohibits the use of food as a reward for behavior or academic performance.

Food Policy & Food Access (all grades)

Please see Appendix II; all staff and students are expected to follow the school's policy. Academy 360 is a part of the National Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program through Denver Public Schools.

IV. Physical Activity

Children and adolescents should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks or physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason.

"Safe and properly supervised recess offers children cognitive, physical, emotional and social benefits. It should be used as a complement to physical education classes, not a substitute, and whether it's spent indoors or outdoors, recess should provide free, unstructured play or activity. The AAP recommends that recess should never be withheld as a punishment, as it serves as a fundamental component of development and social interaction that students may not receive in a more complex school environment. Study authors conclude that minimizing or eliminating recess can negatively affect academic achievement, as growing evidence links recess to improved physical health, social skills and cognitive development." – American Association of Pediatrics

Academy 360 will not use recess and PE as punishment nor reward and will not use language implying that a student may "earn" recess or PE for positive behavior nor be denied recess or PE because of negative behavior. Denial of PE and recess are not a part of Academy 360's discipline system. The school will provide teachers and other school staff with a [list of ideas](#) for alternative ways to discipline students.

To the extent practicable, the school will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. The school will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

¹ https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/hsmrs/Connecticut/Food_As_Reward.pdf

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Physical Education

The school will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts (discussed in the “*Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education*” subsection). The curriculum will support the essential components of physical education.

All students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. The school will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

All **elementary students** in each grade will receive physical education for at least 120 minutes per week throughout the school year.

The school’s physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments (via FitnessGram) and will use criterion-based reporting for each student. Students will be moderately to vigorously active for at least 50% of class time during most or all physical education class sessions.

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

Health education will be required in all grades (elementary) and the school will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 the following essential topics on physical activity:

- The physical, psychological, or social benefits of physical activity
- How physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- How an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease
- Health-related fitness, that is, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition
- Differences between physical activity, exercise and fitness
- Phases of an exercise session, that is, warm up, workout and cool down
- Overcoming barriers to physical activity
- Decreasing sedentary activities, such as TV watching
- Opportunities for physical activity in the community
- Preventing injury during physical activity

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- Weather-related safety, for example, avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia and sunburn while being physically active
- How much physical activity is enough, that is, determining frequency, intensity, time and type of physical activity
- Developing an individualized physical activity and fitness plan
- Monitoring progress toward reaching goals in an individualized physical activity plan
- Dangers of using performance-enhancing drugs, such as steroids
- Social influences on physical activity, including media, family, peers and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to physical activity and fitness
- How to influence, support, or advocate for others to engage in physical activity
- How to resist peer pressure that discourages physical activity.

Recess

Academy 360 will offer at least **30 minutes of recess** on all days during the school year. The school has appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms located just inside/outside the cafeteria to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating. Hand-washing time, as well as time to put away coats/hats/gloves, will be built in to the recess transition period/timeframe before students enter the cafeteria.

Outdoor recess will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play. Please see Appendix II for the school's weather policy.

In the event that the school or must conduct **indoor recess**, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable. *[Needs drafting.]*

Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active, and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Classroom Physical Activity Breaks

The school recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered **periodic opportunities** to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. The school recommends teachers provide short (3-5-minute) physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom time at

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least three days per week. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

The school will provide resources and links to resources, tools, and technology with ideas for classroom physical activity breaks. Resources and ideas are available through [USDA](#) and the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#).

Active Academics

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into “core” subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

The school supports classroom teachers incorporating physical activity and employing kinesthetic learning approaches into core subjects by providing annual professional development opportunities and resources, including information on leading activities, activity options, as well as making available background material on the connections between learning and movement.

Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

V. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

The school will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues and physical activity facilities. The school will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development and strong educational outcomes.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and complementary of the wellness policy, including but not limited to ensuring the involvement of the WSCC.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy guidelines. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

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Community Partnerships

The school will cultivate relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, neighborhood organizations, SNAP-Ed providers and coordinators, etc.) in support of this wellness policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement

The school will promote to families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

As described in the "Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications" subsection, the school will use electronic mechanisms (e.g., email or displaying notices on the school's website), as well as non-electronic mechanisms, (e.g., newsletters, presentations to parents or sending information home to parents), to ensure that all families are actively notified of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

The school will focus on staff wellness issues, identifies and disseminates wellness resources and performs other functions that support staff wellness in coordination with human resources staff.

The school will implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. Examples of strategies are below:

Healthy Eating

- Complimentary healthy breakfast daily with students;
- Daily nutritious lunches, including fresh fruits, vegetables, vegetarian options, and a salad bar, for approximately \$4.25 a day;
- Complimentary water coolers are located in the Cafeteria and in the 3rd floor hallway;
- Healthy meal and snack options at professional development sessions, potlucks, and other meetings;

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- Refrigerator and microwave use in teacher collaboration room;
- User-friendly food policies promoting healthy choices (see Appendix I)

Active Living

- Support of walking meetings;
- Encourage lunch outdoors, including picnic tables and shade for breaks;
- Participation in classroom movement breaks with students;
- Join in with the A360 Fit Club, Orangetheory Fitness Club, Staff Tabata, etc.!
- Offer stability balls or ergonomic chairs to support healthy back posture.

Health Promotion

- Offer health education seminars and workshops through the school year during professional development sessions;
- Provide onsite behavior-change support, such as weight management and smoking cessation, to interested staff.
- Respecting teachers' evening hours so they are able to get seven to eight hours a sleep each night.
- At bank of PTO days off to use as needed – whether it be to take a trip or for a much needed mental health day.
- A staff culture supporting each member being their healthiest, best self!

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