

# HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICY

## **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 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 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;

Thus, Venture Academy is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being and ability and enthusiasm to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of Venture Academy to:

- 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.
- provide students K-9 with opportunities, support and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- sell and serve foods and beverages that will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U. S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- have food and beverages prepared by qualified child nutrition professionals.
- provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; while accommodating the religious, ethnic and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and provide clean, safe and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- to the maximum extent practicable, participate in the available federal school meal programs (National School Lunch program and School Breakfast program).

Schools will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish links between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

## **Rationale:**

The link between nutrition, physical activity and learning is well documented. Healthy eating and activity patterns are essential for a student to passionately pursue his or her interests and develop a love for learning and reach his or her personal best, achieve full physical and mental growth, and life long health and well-being and excellence. Healthy eating and physical activity are essential to reduce risk for many chronic diseases. Schools have a responsibility to help students learn, establish and maintain lifelong healthy eating and activity patterns. Well planned and effectively implemented school nutrition and fitness programs have been shown to enhance students' overall health as well as their behavior and academic achievement in school. Staff wellness also is an integral part of a healthy school environment, since school staff can be daily role models for healthy behaviors.

## **Goal**

All students in Venture Academy shall possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make nutritious food choices and enjoyable physical activity choices for a lifetime. All staff in Venture Academy are encouraged to model healthful eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

To meet this goal, the Venture Academy adopts this school wellness policy with the following commitments to nutrition education, physical activity, nutrition guidelines, other school based activities and implementations. This policy is designed to effectively utilize school and community resources to equitably serve the needs and interests of all students and staff, taking into consideration difference in culture.

## **Nutrition Education**

- The school cafeteria or eating area serves as a learning laboratory to support nutrition education through menu offerings and signage.
- The school will provide education for students to help them learn skills needed to practice lifelong healthy eating.
- The classroom, cafeteria and other school venues provide clear and consistent messages that explain and reinforce healthy eating and physical activity habits.

## **Promotion of Healthy Eating and Nutrition Guidelines**

- Encourage the increased consumption of a variety of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grain and low fat dairy products.
- Offer choices of food and beverages outside the lunch and breakfast meal service which are a good source of nutrients, moderate in sodium, moderate or low in fat,

and moderate in sugar that is not naturally occurring in the food and moderate in calories.

- Strive to improve student nutrition behaviors on the school campus; include an increase of healthier meal choices by students to include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low fat dairy products.
- Serve school meals which meet the USDA nutrition standards for all meals as well as provide sufficient choices, including new foods and foods prepared in new ways to meet the taste preference of the students.
- Designated lunch periods for all students offer sufficient time to enjoy eating healthy foods. Lunch periods will be scheduled near the middle of the school day when possible.
- Students shall be encouraged to test healthy food items with which they are not familiar to promote behavior change and healthy school meal consumption.
- Support healthy eating by utilizing the food service area as a expeditionary learning laboratory to support classroom instruction through menu offerings and signs supporting healthy eating.

### **Promotion of Healthy Eating and Nutrition Guidelines**

- Food and beverages are not used as reward or punishment. Food is appealing and attractive to children, and is served in a clean and pleasant setting.
- Classroom celebrations shall encourage healthy choices and portion control.
- Set guidelines for refreshment served at parties, celebrations and meetings during the school day.
- Offer skim or 1% milk fat beverage selection where 2% milk fat or whole milk fat beverages are available and encourage the consumption of lower fat options.
- Provide student's opportunities to practice healthy habits – they can choose from an array of healthy food options, eat in relaxed and comfortable surroundings and enjoy daily physical activity.

### **Sharing of Foods and Beverages**

- We discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

### **Physical Activity**

- Schools should ensure that every student from kindergarten through ninth grade receives regular, age appropriate quality physical education.
- Provide within the school environment a safe enjoyable activity for all students .
- Provide, through physical education, safe and satisfying physical activity for all students, including those with special needs.

- Provide for fitness education and assessment to help students understand and improve or maintain their physical well-being.
- Promote the benefits of doing regular amounts of physical activity now and through life.
- Schools should ensure that physical activity facilities on school grounds are kept safe and well-maintained.

### **Goals for Other School Based Activities**

- The after-school environment includes physical activity and promotes healthy eating habits.
- Schools should provide information to parents to help them promote and incorporate physical activity and healthy eating into their children's lives.
- Schools should provide services to ensure that students with nutrition-related health problems are referred to appropriate services for counseling or medical treatment.
- Dining room supervisory staff (teachers, aids, janitorial staff, etc.) shall receive appropriate training in how to maintain a safe, orderly, and pleasant eating environment

### **Staff as Role Models**

- Train staff who supervise student dining areas to encourage healthy eating patterns through a positive daily experience.
- Offer opportunities and encouragement for staff to model and be leaders of healthy eating habits.
- Develop strategies for teachers, school administrators, students, foodservice professionals, and community members to serve as role models in practicing healthy eating and being physically active.

### **Food Safety/Food Security**

- All foods made available will comply with state and local food safety and sanitation regulations.
- Implement Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plans and guidelines to prevent food illness in school.
- All food service equipment and facilities must meet applicable local and state standards concerning health, safe food preparation, handling and storage, drinking water, sanitation and workplace safety

**Measuring Implementation:**

- Conduct a review of the progress toward school wellness policy goals each year and identify areas for improvement.
- Prepare and submit a yearly report to the school's administrators regarding the progress toward implementation of the school wellness policy and recommendations for any revisions to the policy as necessary.
- Periodically assess how well the policy is being managed and enforced.

Venture Academy will create, strengthen and work with the school health council to develop, implement, monitor, review and as necessary revise school nutrition and physical activity policies.