Nativity Preparatory Academy

School Wellness Policies on

Physical Activity and Nutrition

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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, 33% of high school students do not participate in sufficient vigorous physical activity and 72% of high school students do not attend daily physical education classes;

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, Nativity Preparatory Academy 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 the Nativity Preparatory Academy that:

- The school will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing the schools nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades 5th- 8th grade 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 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, Nativity Preparatory Academy will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program [including after-school snacks], Summer Food Service Program, Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program, and Child and Adult Care Food Program [including suppers]).
- Nativity 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.

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School Health Committee

Nativity Preparatory Academy will create a school health committee to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The committee will be made up of parents, teachers, administrators and food service administrators as well as community nutrition advocates.

Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs in collaboration with Foodlink, meals at Nativity Preparatory 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;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;[2]
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk[3] and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.[3, 4]

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:

- Nativity Prep will, to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program. ● Nativity Prep will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
- Nativity Prep will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through take-home materials, and other means of communication.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals Nativity 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[5]. Nativity Prep will provide meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income. Nativity Preparatory will require students to partake in the breakfast and lunch program which at his time is provided by Foodlink. Since nutritional, healthy choices can't be monitored successfully when lunches are brought from home, Nativity students will not be allowed to bring lunch.

Meal Times and Scheduling Nativity Preparatory Academy

- will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, *e.g.*, lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- should 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.

- Will provide students with access to water during breakfast, lunch, snack and other activities.

Qualifications of the School Food Service Staff Qualified nutrition professionals will administer Nativity Preparatory Academy school meal programs. As part of Nativity Preps responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages Schools should 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.

Snacks Snacks served during the Nativity 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. Nativity will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of meals, children's nutritional needs and other considerations.

- If eligible, schools that provide snacks through after-school programs will pursue receiving reimbursements through the National School Lunch Program.

School Sponsored Events Nativity Prep will be conscious of its responsibility to serve healthy, nutritional foods and beverages during school sponsored events as it is throughout the school day.

Withholding Food Privileges Nativity will not withhold food or beverages served through school meals, snacks or school sponsored events as a punishment.

Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nativity Preparatory Academy aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should 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 students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- is part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in 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; and
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

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 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 other subject lessons; and
- classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate

Communications with Parents Nativity Preparatory Academy will offer healthy eating seminars for parents. 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 take-home materials and special events.

Staff Wellness Nativity Preparatory Academy 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.

Social-Emotional Wellness Policy Section

Purpose and Commitment

Nativity Preparatory Academy recognizes that student wellness includes not only physical health but also emotional, mental, and social well-being. The school is committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where all students can develop self-awareness, emotional regulation, resilience, and positive relationships.

The school will integrate social and emotional learning (SEL) into daily instruction, school climate initiatives, and staff development in alignment with New York State Education Department's *Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks* and the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model.

Goals and Guiding Statements

1. **Whole-Child Development:**
   The school will support students' academic, social, and emotional growth through programs that promote empathy, self-management, responsible decision-making,

   and positive relationships.

2. **Safe and Supportive Climate:**
   The school will ensure that every student feels safe, valued, and connected to at least one trusted adult in the school community.

3. **Equitable Access:**
   The school will provide equitable access to wellness and mental health supports

regardless of background, identity, or family circumstances.

4. **Staff Wellness and Modeling:**
   The school will promote adult social-emotional wellness and provide staff with tools to model healthy coping, communication, and relationship-building skills.

Implementation and Practices

The following practices will be incorporated into school operations and programs:

1. **Social-Emotional Learning Curriculum:**

   ○ SEL instruction will be integrated across grade levels and subject areas using evidence-based approaches aligned with NYSED's SEL competencies.

   ○ Lessons will emphasize self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

2. **Restorative Practices:**

   ○ The school will use restorative conversations, circles, and mediation to address conflict, repair harm, and strengthen community.

3. **Mental Health Supports:**

   ○ Access to counseling, referrals, and partnerships with community agencies will be maintained to address students' mental health needs.

   ○ Staff will receive annual professional development on recognizing and responding to signs of student distress.

4. **Mindfulness and Stress Management:**

   ○ Teachers will be encouraged to include brief mindfulness, reflection, or movement breaks during the school day to promote focus and reduce stress.

5. **Student Voice and Leadership:**

   ○ Students will be invited to participate in leadership roles in wellness initiatives, peer mentoring, and feedback on school climate.

6. **Family and Community Engagement:**

   ○ Families will be offered resources, workshops, and communications that support social-emotional learning and wellness at home.

   ○ The school will partner with local organizations to expand access to mental health and wellness programming.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The Wellness Committee will include a member knowledgeable in social-emotional learning or mental health.
- Annual climate surveys, student feedback, and attendance data will inform updates to SEL practices.
- SEL and mental health goals will be reviewed as part of the broader School Wellness Policy assessment process.

Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Physical Activity Opportunities at Nativity Preparatory Nativity Preparatory Academy provides students with physical education classes as follows:

Per NYS requirements, Physical Education Classes:

5th/6th grade - 45 minutes 3x weekly

7th/8th grade 45 minute classes 2x weekly

In addition: another 1.5 hours of physical activity in their enrichment programs in which all students are required to participate.

Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring The principal will ensure compliance with established school nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. School food service staff, at the school, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the principal. In addition, the principal will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes.

The superintendent or designee will develop a summary report every three years on district-wide compliance with the district's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from schools within the district. That report will be provided to the school board and also distributed to all school health councils,

parent/teacher organizations, school principals, and school health services personnel in the district.

Policy Review To help with the initial development of the Nativity Preparatory's wellness policies, a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies will be evaluated. The results of those school-by-school

assessments will be compiled 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, Nativity Preparatory Academy will review our 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 district, and individual schools within the district, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.