

# **Evangelical Children's Home**

## **Wellness Policy**

On June 30, 2004 President Bush signed into public law 108-265, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 which requires each local educational agency participating in a school lunch program, to establish a local school wellness policy. Evangelical Children's Home (ECH) strives to have an impact on students' activity and eating behaviors.

Improving the school nutrition environment provides a road map for assessing and improving school policies, in order to provide students with a healthy school nutrition environment. This wellness policy combines education with practice to create healthful school environments and encourages healthy behavior. The goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities will be adult driven and based upon the cognitive capabilities of the students.

ECH recognizes and accepts the following wellness facts:

1. Students need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn and thrive.
2. 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.
3. Major risk factors of many diseases (heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes) are poor eating habits, low amounts of physical activity and obesity. Since many times these health patterns are established during childhood, children must be educated about good health choices.
4. A small percentage of students eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from the USDA "My Plate" that is split into four sections: red for fruits, green for vegetables, orange for grains, and purple for proteins, with a separate blue section for dairy on the side.

### **SCHOOL WELLNESS COMMITTEE**

The ECH Wellness Committee involves the following members:

1. Activities Director
2. Clinical Director
3. Nursing Department
4. Education Teacher

5. Food Service Manager

6. School Food Authority

Students enrolled in ECH have the ability to make concrete decisions about their immediate needs. The inclusion of a student on the Wellness Committee was not deemed appropriate by the membership in that the nature of the student's disabilities makes it difficult for him or her to make more abstract program-wide policy decisions about meal planning and health related decisions.

### **SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY**

ECH 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. The School Wellness Policy encourages a comprehensive approach to student wellness that is sensitive to individuals and community needs.

The following procedures will guide the implementation of the ECH School Wellness policy.

#### **Nutrition Guidelines**

1. All foods and beverages made available on campus during the school day are consistent with the USDA guidelines.
2. Guidelines for reimbursable school meals will not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to law.

#### **National School Lunch Program**

1. All school lunches will comply with USDA and State regulations.
2. Regulations under the USDA lunch program will be adhered to closely.
3. Meals will be served in a clean and pleasant setting.
4. Milk served will be 1% unflavored or fat free flavored or unflavored.
5. A variety of fruits and vegetables will be served at lunch.

## **A la carte**

The food service program will not include a la carte offerings to students.

## **Free and Reduced Price Lunch**

ECH 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 lunches.

## **Lunch Time and Scheduling**

1. Student lunches shall be scheduled between 12:00 p.m. and 12:30 p.m.
2. Students will have adequate time in which to eat and enjoy their meal. Consideration will be given to the needs of different groups, such as younger children or those with specific developmental needs related to meals.
3. School personnel will assist all students in developing the healthy practice of washing hands before eating.

## **Student Rewards**

Educators will explore and identify nonfood rewards for academic achievement and behavior. More intrinsic motivators for student learning (sensory, attention, control over the environment and student choices) will always be used before food reinforcement.

As a last resort when food reinforcement is necessary, careful attention must be given to the time and frequency of issuing food and the impact this will have so the student will want to eat the nutritional lunch. Food reinforcement should be avoided one hour prior to lunch, if at all possible.

Food reinforcements should be of nutritional value, emphasizing whole grains, fruit and vegetables and lean or reduced fat proteins.

Food of minimal nutritional value may be offered as a reward when the student does not respond to nutritious food options. However, the teacher must actively pursue the substitution of healthier food options over a period of time.

## **Snacks**

Generally, snacks are not offered in school during the regular or extended school year. This includes snacks purchased by the school, school staff, or the parents. A student may eat snacks provided by the parent for the child's own consumption.

Schools are permitted to offer nutritious food to those students identified as being hungry and unable to focus on instruction in the morning or presenting behaviors on the journey home due to

hunger. In these circumstances, the education teacher identifies the students who function more effectively with increased nutrition. The school may provide nutritious food each morning and/or before the journey home to the identified students who will eat this food in a location other than the classroom, whenever possible. Appropriate food include non-sweetened cereal, wholegrain bread, crackers, tortillas, pancakes, low fat or fat free milk, low fat yogurt, peanut butter, scrambled egg, reduced fat cheese, vegetables (raw or 100% juice), and fruit (raw, canned in fruit juice or extra light syrup, frozen without sugar or 100% juice).

During home living instruction teachers should focus attention on nutritious food options when providing students with authentic learning experiences.

### **Classroom Parties, Celebrations, and School Events**

It is acceptable if a parent/guardian/surrogate parent chooses to acknowledge a student's birthday by bringing store bought treats to school. No items made at home will be permitted.

When educators are responsible for planning classroom parties, school celebrations or events, at least fifteen minutes of activities other than eating will be included.

When food is involved, at least one healthy food choice will be available. A copy of healthy food choices will be given to the schools as a reference.

### **Nutrition Education**

Nutrition education and information will be integrated into other subject lessons where appropriate to the cognitive functioning of the student and subject matter.

As indicated, students will be instructed on the difference between healthy foods and those with minimal nutritional value.

One hundred percent of food prepared in home living class will match IEP goals for learning meal preparation and will focus on food the student will have access to in the home environment.

### **Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting**

Students will be provided with nutritional guidance and physical education through the ECH curriculum.

Students will have support and encouragement to be physically (both actively and passively) active with learning activities incorporating high energy movement opportunities.

Educators will provide opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activities to be incorporated into other subject lessons for all students.

Physical activity for students who are not mobile shall include positioning in adaptive equipment twice daily.

Educators will not use physical activity or withhold opportunities for physical activities as a means of student discipline.

### **Physical Education**

All students, regardless of disability will receive physical education as addressed in the student's IEP.

The primary focus of physical education will be on life skills, motor development, physical fitness and endurance skill building.

Physical education classes will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests and abilities of all students.

Physical education classes will have a student to teacher ratio comparable to those in the classroom.

Physical education will engage students in mild to vigorous activity during at least 25% of class time.

### **Other School Based Activities Communication with Parents/Guardians/Surrogate Parents**

The school will support parents/guardians/surrogate parents to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their child.

Parents/guardians/surrogate parents will be provided with information on healthy snack alternatives at least once a year.

All parents/guardians/surrogate parents will be provided with nutrition education information through newsletters and home-school communications at least once a year.

The school will support parents'/guardians'/surrogate parents' efforts to provide their child with opportunities to be physically active outside of school by sharing information about physical activities through physical education homework, newsletters and home-school communications at least once a year.

### **Tobacco Free Environment**

ECH is a tobacco free environment. This includes all types of tobacco and smoking devices, such as electronic cigarettes.

### **Monitoring and Policy Review**

The School Food Authority will serve in the leadership role for the implementation of this policy.

The School Food Authority or designee will provide a copy of the School Wellness Policy and the *School Wellness Policy Needs Assessment and Evaluation Tool* form to each staff member at the

start of each school year.

Review of the School Wellness Policy will be discussed with all newly hired staff, including contracted staff.

In February of each year, data will be collected by the School Food Authority or designee on the *School Wellness Policy Needs Assessment and Evaluation Tool* form.

The completed *School Wellness Policy Needs Assessment and Evaluation Tool* form will be submitted to the School Wellness Program Coordinator, by or before March 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

The School Wellness Program Coordinator will prepare a summary of this data for the School Wellness Committee.

In April of each year, the School Wellness Committee will review the summary of the data from the *School Wellness Policy Needs Assessment and Evaluation Tool* and make recommendations.

If interested in becoming a member of the Wellness Committee contact ECH's School Food Authority.