



**Vermont Achievement Center  
88 Park Street, Rutland VT 05701**

## **Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition**

### **Introduction**

The intent of this policy is to ensure established wellness goals are met by providing a learning atmosphere that promotes and protects children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting and educating students and staff members on healthy eating, eating habits and physical activity.

It is the Vermont Achievement Center's (VAC) Policy 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 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.

-Foods and beverages 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, Vermont Achievement Center will participate in available federal school meal programs including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program, After School Snack Program, Summer Food Service Program, and the Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program.

-Schools 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.

-Provide educators, kitchen staff as well as general staff tools and education opportunities to better understand nutrition and wellness policies.



## **TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:**

### **I. VAC School Health Council**

The Vermont Achievement Center will create, strengthen, and work within an existing school health council to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The council also will serve as a resource to the school for implementing those policies. The school health council consists of parents, students (if and when applicable), representatives of the school food service authority, school administrators, classroom teachers, school health professionals, and the public.

### **II. Nutritional Quality of Foods Served at VAC**

#### **School Meals**

Meals served through the National School Lunch, Breakfast and Afterschool Snack Programs 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 for all meal programs served throughout the school.
- Serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA)
- Ensure whole grain requirements are met using current USDA Standards.
- Ensure all meal components for each meal are met using USDA Standards.
- Share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information will be made available on menus, a website, on cafeteria menu boards, or other point-of-purchase materials.



-Information on the current meals nutritional content and ingredients of the meals will be found on menus and on the school's website. Information will also be available in the cafeteria in the form of a tray style menu for students to observe proper portions of each meal component.

-Information on the free breakfast and lunch program, fresh fruit and vegetable program, and the summer food service program will be given to parents when children are registered to attend school at VAC.

### **School Beverages**

-Low-Fat 1%, non-fat or non-dairy milk in 8-ounce portions, 6- ounce portions, and 4-ounce portions.

-100% fruit juice in 4-ounce portions for elementary and middle school and 8-ounce portions for high school.

-Plain Free Water is available via water coolers provided by Vermont Heritage Spring Water Company in the cafeteria and other high traffic areas throughout facility.

### **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:

-VAC will, to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program.

-VAC will use methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the classroom, "grab-and-go" breakfast, or breakfast during morning break or recess.

-Notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.

-Encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means

### **Meal Times and Scheduling**

-VAC will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch.



-VAC will schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

-VAC will not schedule any activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities.

-Students are provided with access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.

### **Qualifications of School Food Service Staff**

Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of VAC'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 child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

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

Students attending Vermont Achievement Center are discouraged 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.

### **Fundraising Activities**

To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, VAC fundraising activities will not involve food or will use only foods that comply with nutritional standards and portion sizes as set forth by the USDA. VAC will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity.

### **Snacks**

Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or in VAC's after school enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snack and water, or milk as the primary beverage. VAC will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations.

-VAC will pursue receiving reimbursements through the National School Lunch Program.



### **Rewards**

Vermont Achievement Center will not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards, 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**

Vermont Achievement Center will limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages. Prior to celebrations a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers will be assembled and distributed.

## **III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing**

### **Nutrition Education and Promotion**

Vermont Achievement Center aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. VAC will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion to all students and staff members.

Nutritional education will be offered to 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.

Through both health education classes and in classroom instruction sessions food nutritional and healthy eating habits will be incorporated into the curriculum. An emphasis on fresh local foods will be taught and include trips to our own garden and local farms.

Curriculum will promote fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices. It will also emphasize caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise)

A link will be made with school meal programs, physical movement and nutrition-related curriculum. An emphasis on food marketing and literacy is encouraged and will include 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.

-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.

-Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

### **Communication with Parents**

Vermont Achievement Center supports parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. Distribution of nutrition information will be sent home to parents, and VAC will provide nutrient analyses of school menus. Parents will be encouraged to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages.

### **Food Marketing in Schools.**

School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. VAC 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 sold individually. 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.

Examples of marketing techniques include the following: logos and brand names on/in vending machines, books or curricula, textbook covers, school supplies, scoreboards, school structures, and sports equipment; educational incentive programs that provide food as a reward; programs that provide schools with supplies when families buy low-nutrition food products; in-school television, such as Channel One; free samples or coupons; and food sales through fundraising activities. Marketing activities that promote healthful behaviors (and are



therefore allowable) include: vending machine covers promoting water; pricing structures that promote healthy options in a la carte lines or vending machines; sales of fruit for fundraisers; and coupons for discount gym memberships.

### **Staff Wellness**

Vermont Achievement Center 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. VAC maintains a staff wellness committee composed of at least one staff member, dietitian or other health professional, recreation program representative, union representative, and employee benefits specialist. The committee should develop, promote, and oversee a multifaceted plan to promote staff health and wellness. The plan should be based on input solicited from school staff and should outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff. The staff wellness committee distributes its plan to the school health council annually.

## **IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education**

### **Daily Physical Education (P.E.) K-12**

All students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive daily physical education (or its equivalent of 150 minutes/week for elementary school students and 225 minutes/week for middle and high school students) for the entire school year. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

### **Daily Recess**

All school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

### **Physical Activity and Punishment**

Teachers and other school staff will not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment.



## **V. Monitoring and Policy Review**

### **Monitoring**

The designee will ensure compliance with established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. They will ensure compliance with those policies and will report on the school's compliance to the School Health Council.

School food service staff, at Vermont Achievement Center will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the Food Nutrition Supervisor. In addition, VAC will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes. A SMI review from the Vermont state agency will be conducted every five years.

### **Policy Review**

To help with the initial development of VAC's wellness policies, a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies will be conducted.

Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. VAC will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

Date: 4/4/24