



The Whitney Academy, Inc.

Wellness Policy on Physical Activity and Nutrition

INTRODUCTION

As a standard of care, The Whitney Academy recognizes that children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive.

Good health fosters student attendance and educational progress. In designing the Whitney Academy's Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition, the following is taken into consideration: that obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and that physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity; that heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States, and that the major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity are often established in childhood.

The Whitney Academy is committed to providing a school and residential environment that promotes and protects children's health, wellbeing, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the Whitney Academy that:

- All students will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages served will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- The Food Services Department / Cook / Registered Dietitian will provide students with access to a variety of nutritious and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- The Medical, Residential, Education and Recreational Therapy staff 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 the meal program.

I. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Served at The Whitney Academy

Meals served will:

- Be appealing and attractive to students;
- Be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;
- Offer alternatives to students with specific medically based nutritional restrictions or needs
- Meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations including School Nutrition Program Guidelines including, but not limited to:
 - Offering non-flavored fat free or low fat milk at each meal
 - Ensuring at least 80 percent of the weekly grains offered in the school lunch and breakfast programs will contain at least 50% whole grain.
 - Ensuring average sodium levels don't exceed 1,225mg for lunch and 600mg for breakfast.
 - Limiting added sugar and high sugar foods.

The Food Services Department / Cook will be responsible for the program, which includes but is not limited to:

- At least three meals and two snacks will be provided daily constituting a nutritionally adequate diet.
- Meals shall be prepared and served in a manner, amount and at times appropriate to the nutritional needs of the students.
- The Whitney Academy diet designations are the House Diet, Low Fat House Diet, House Diet Plus Extra Portions and the House Diet Plus Might Shakes. The nutritionist will assess students' monthly and based on each student's Body Mass Index (BMI), will make dietary changes if/when needed. Individualized diets will be maintained for students if they have medical conditions that require this.
- The Whitney Academy will share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents, guardians and students upon request.

Meal Times and Scheduling

- Meals are scheduled for 30-minute periods at appropriate times, (*breakfast between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m.*; lunch between 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.; supper between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.)
- Meals will not be schedule during tutoring, groups, student organizational meetings or activities.
- All school lunch periods are scheduled so that they either proceed or follow Structured Recreation or Physical Education periods.
- Students will be provided access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks
- Staff will take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (e.g., orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff

The Food Services Director (USDA School Nutrition Manager category) must be Serve Safe certified and will oversee the school meal programs. As part of the Whitney Academy's responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals. Staff development programs may include training programs for staff involved in the preparation and serving of food.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages.

The Whitney Academy prohibits 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.

Foods/Beverages Sold Individually

The Whitney Academy does not provide Foods and Beverages Sold Individually (*i.e.*, foods sold outside of school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte [snack] lines, fundraisers, school stores, etc.).

Students, at times, are allowed to purchases food/beverage items while off grounds during field trips or other events. During such times, staff will make every effort to encourage healthy food choices or to limit the quantity of items purchased. Students are only allowed to access/consume purchased food/Beveridge items during designated meal or snack times.

Fundraising Activities

The Whitney Academy does not participate in fundraising activities that involve food.

Snacks

- Snacks served during the school day 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.
- When students are on off grounds trips they are encouraged to make healthy food choices and may be restricted in their choices due to health concerns.
- A registered dietitian will assess if/when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations.

II. Nutrition Education and Physical Activity Promotion

Nutrition Education and Promotion

The Whitney Academy aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Whitney Academy provides nutrition education and engages in nutrition promotion that:

- Is offered at each grade level as part of a sequential and comprehensive program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health. This is presented as a component during health education classes.
- Is part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences
- 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)

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting

- In an effort to help students embrace physical activity as a personal behavior, classroom Health Education will compliment Physical Education by reinforcing the knowledge of self-management skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle and to reduce time spent of sedentary activities.
- Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into lessons in other subject areas, when appropriate.
- Classroom teachers will provide short “Movement Breaks” throughout the day for physical activity such as Stressbusters or Yoga.

III. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Daily Structured Recreation:

- All students at Whitney Academy will have at least 30 minutes a day, three days per week, of structured recreation time during the school day.
- Students will also have at least 30 minutes per day of structured recreation time after school.
- This time will be outdoors, as appropriate, during which staff will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally, through the provision of space and equipment, through offering and brain storming activity ideas and through active involvement with students.

Physical Education:

- All students at Whitney Academy will receive 30 minutes per day, two days per week, for a total of 60 minutes of physical education per week.
- Physical education classes will focus primarily on increasing the activity level of the students, thereby increasing their overall physical fitness level.
- Physical education classes also offer opportunities for students to learn, develop and practice various social skills and foster personal growth. These objectives are accomplished through cooperative activities, active games and fitness exercises.
- Students learn the major sport skill areas of throwing, kicking, catching and striking, though focus is on the broad sense of the skill, rather than sport-specific skill.
- Activities tend to be non-traditional to encourage participation of all students, and increase leisure activity awareness.

- The classes are designed to get the students to participate in moderate to vigorous physical activity at least 70% of each class. Participation of all students is expected, as appropriate, and active participation of staff is encouraged.

Physical Activity and Punishment:

The Whitney Academy will not use physical activity (i.e. running, pushups, etc.) or withhold opportunities to participate in Physical Education or other structured recreation activities as a means of punishment.

IV. Additional Wellness Activities

Personal Wellness:

Whitney Academy provides comprehensive trauma-informed treatment to all youth. This includes Individual and Group Therapy, which includes (but not limited to) topics such as social skills, personal relationships, attunement/attachment, self-regulation, movement exercises, self-advocacy, and healthy sexuality to support social/emotional development and overall personal wellness.

Independent Living Skills Instruction

As part of the residential programming, students receive instruction and are actively involved in all aspects of home life such as laundry completion, grocery shopping, meal planning/preparation, personal hygiene/self-care. They also receive instruction in all Preparing Adolescents for Young Adulthood (PAYA) modules.

Recreational Programming:

A Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) oversees recreational programming and provides one hour per week of direct Recreation Therapy to all students. Social/recreational activities are planned each day and are open to all students. Students, unless deemed behaviorally unsafe to do so, are also encouraged to participate in varying off-grounds activities such as bowling, hiking, fishing, apple picking, and trips to the movies, museums, local farms, car shows, and zoos.

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Informing the Public:

Whitney Academy's Wellness Policy on Physical Activity and Nutrition, which includes plans for updating the policy, will be posted on its website at <https://www.whitneyacademy.org/about-us/wellness-policies/>. Wellness

Committee meeting dates and minutes are available upon request by visiting <https://www.whitneyacademy.org/contact-us/>

Wellness Committee

The Wellness Committee will be responsible for assessing the wellness policy, monitoring goals, and setting action items. The Committee will meet at least 4 times annually and be comprised of the Program Director, Admissions Director, Clinical Director, Nursing Director, Director of Research and Development, Residential Director, Assistant Residential Director, Education Director, Director of Staff Recruitment and Training, Recreation Therapist, Human Resources and Food Services Director.

The Wellness Committee will review and consider input and feedback from students, parents, teachers, clinicians, residential staff members, and food services. The Admissions Director, who also serves as the Parent Advisory Board Facilitator, will serve as liaison between parents and the committee; the Director of Research and Development, also serves as the Chairperson for the Performance Improvement (PI) Committee, and will serve as liaison between the PI and Wellness committees; and the Director of Staff Recruitment and Training also leads Student Council meetings and will serve as a liaison between students and the committee.

Monitoring

The Wellness Committee will monitor compliance with the Whitney Academy's established wellness policies and will ensure that such policies remain current with national, as well as local standards. If/when revisions are recommended or necessary, the Committee will present to the Executive Professional Staff Organization (PSO) for final approval.

Policy Review

The Wellness committee will be responsible for reviewing and updating this policy. At least once annually, a formal review of the policy will take place and recommendations will be made to the PSO. As part of that review, 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 will be assessed. The committee, will also, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

At least once every three years, the wellness committee will complete the 'Massachusetts Local Wellness Policy Implementation Evaluation Form' and assess the policy to determine compliance, alignment with model policies, and progress towards goals.

VI. Administrative Review

Whitney Academy acknowledges that The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, as amended by the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA), requires an accountability process, which ensures compliance with school nutrition program requirements. Upon request, such as during an Administrative Review, Whitney Academy will provide the following:

- A copy or appropriate web address of the current Local School Wellness Policy.
- Documentation to show that the policy is made available to the public.
- Documentation to show when and how the review and update of the Local School Wellness Policy occurs.
- Information on who is involved in reviewing and updating the Local School Wellness Policy.
- Documentation on how potential stakeholders are made aware of their ability to participate in the development, review, update, and implementation of the Local School Wellness Policy.
- A copy of the most recent assessment on the implementation of the Local School Wellness Policy.
- Documentation on how the public is made aware of the results of the most recent assessment on the implementation of the Local School Wellness Policy.