

Discovery Charter School Wellness Program

Rationale

Discovery Charter School recognizes the important role nutrition plays in academic performance as well as overall quality of life. The National Education Association references numerous articles supporting the effects of nutrition on the classroom. For example, hunger often has a negative impact on students' success, attendance, and behavior.

Childhood obesity has more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents in the past 30 years. The percentage of children aged 6–11 years in the United States who were obese increased from 7% in 1980 to nearly 18% in 2012, and in 2018 was 20.3%. Similarly, the percentage of adolescents aged 12–19 years who were obese increased from 5% to nearly 21% over the same period. Empty calories from added sugars and solid fats contribute to 40% of daily calories for children and adolescents aged 2–18 years, affecting the overall quality of their diets. Approximately half of these empty calories come from six sources: soda, fruit drinks, dairy desserts, grain desserts, pizza, and whole milk. Lifestyle issues — too little activity and too many calories from food and drinks — are the main contributors to childhood obesity. Obesity puts affected children and adolescents at risk for poor health.

Physical activity is a key component of the health and well-being of all students. Physical activity lowers the risk for certain diseases, including obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. Physical activity also helps improve brain function, allowing students to perform better in school. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends adolescents get at least 60 minutes of physical activity five days per week. In 2013, only 29% percent of high school students had participated in at least 60 minutes per day of physical activity on each of the 7 days before the survey. Discovery recognizes this and commits to promoting and providing opportunities for physical activity during and outside the school day.

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed numerous additional hardships on children such as restricted access to healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity both in and out of schools. It is more important than ever to improve, support, and promote healthy behaviors amongst students, and Discovery will to do so by:

- Providing students access to healthy foods and beverages
- Providing opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity
- Providing nutritional education
- Requiring that all meals served by the school meet or exceed the federal nutritional guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture

A wellness committee will be formed to oversee and maintain these activities through the following policy goals.

I. Wellness Committee

Revised and Approved March
16/2022

A. The Wellness Committee will consist of:

1. Parents/Guardians
2. Food Service Directors and Staff
3. Students
4. Physical Education Teacher
5. Classroom Teachers and School Staff
6. School Administration
7. School Board Members
8. Community Members

B. The Wellness Committee will develop, implement, monitor, review, and when necessary, revise the wellness policy. The committee will also serve as a resource to the school for the implementation of the policy.

II. Nutrition Education and Promotion

Nutrition topics shall be integrated within the comprehensive health education curriculum and taught at every grade level according to standards of the Indiana Department of Education.

A. Nutrition education and promotion will be provided as part of a Comprehensive Health Education Program

1. Health education will be taught by a licensed teacher.
2. School staff will collaborate with organizations to provide educational opportunities to students related to nutrition.
3. Nutrition education will include topics such as reading food labels, making healthy choices, and portion control.
4. Nutrition educators will partner with staff of the school food service program to use the cafeteria as a learning lab. Healthy items, such as salads and fruits, will be displayed prominently in cafeterias to make healthier choices more appealing.
5. Healthy food choices will be promoted throughout the school by staff and supplemental resources.
6. Nutritional education will be linked with the benefits of physical activity as well as tied to overall well being and production in school.
7. Nutritional information will be made available for foods in school to allow for identifying healthier choices and comparing food options.

III. Child Nutrition and School Meals

Discovery Charter School will provide and promote the National School Lunch Program to ensure all students have access to healthy foods to support healthier choices and promote optimal learning.

A. School Meal Content

1. Meals served through the National School Lunch Program will:

- Be appealing and appetizing to children
 - Meet, at a minimum, the nutrition requirements established by the USDA for federally funded programs
 - Contain 0% trans fats
 - Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables
 - 100% of the grains offered are whole grain-rich
2. All cooked foods will be baked or steamed. Proper procurement procedures and preparation methods will be used to decrease excess fat, calorie, and sodium levels in food.
 3. Schools are encouraged to purchase or obtain fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers when practical.
 4. Students will have the opportunity to provide input on local, cultural, and ethnic favorites.
 5. Special dietary needs of students will be considered when planning meals, according to the document *Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs in the School Nutrition Programs*.
 6. The food services department will share and publicize information about the nutritional content of meals with students and parents/guardians.

B. School Meal Participation

1. To the furthest extent possible, the school will offer programs to qualifying students (free and reduced lunch students) as part of the Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. These programs include:
 - National School Lunch Program
2. When available, healthy school lunches were and will be provided to all students free of charge and regardless of qualification via a provided SSO waiver.

C. Mealtimes and Scheduling

1. Adequate time will be provided to students to eat lunch (at least 20 minutes after being served).
2. Elementary schools will schedule recess after lunch.
3. School meals will be served in clean and pleasant settings.
4. Students will have convenient access to hand-washing and sanitizing stations. Scheduled restroom breaks and handwashing time will be provided prior to lunchtime.
5. Potable (drinking) water must be readily available at all mealtimes.
6. Appropriate supervision will be provided in the cafeteria and rules for safe behavior shall be consistently enforced.

D. Professional Development

1. Professional development and training will be provided at least annually to food service managers and staff on proper food handling techniques and healthy cooking practices.

IV. Competitive and Other Foods and Beverages

Discovery Charter School will provide and allow foods and beverages that support proper nutrition and promote healthy choices.

A. Snacks

1. Snacks must be from the approved Nut Free Snack List.
2. The snack list will be reviewed annually. An emphasis will be placed on listing healthy snacks, and encouraging parents and students to choose healthier choices.
3. Snacks, whenever possible, should be sent in a reusable container.

B. Classroom Celebrations and Parties

1. Classroom celebrations will focus on activities rather than food.
2. Classroom celebrations that include food will be limited to one per month. An emphasis will be placed on having the majority of available snacks meet the approved nutrition standards.
3. Schools shall inform parents/guardians of the classroom celebration guidelines.

C. Food as Rewards or Punishments

1. Teachers and staff will not use food or beverages as a reward.
2. School staff will not withhold food or drink at mealtimes as punishment.

D. Fundraisers

1. Fundraising activities will support healthy eating and wellness. The school will promote the sale of non-food items for school-sponsored fundraising. In-school fundraisers selling food items that do not meet the federal nutrition standards are limited to two such fundraisers per year. The standards do not apply to fundraisers in which the food is clearly not for consumption on the school campus during the school day.

V. Physical Activity and Physical Education

Discovery Charter School supports the health and well-being of students by promoting physical activity through physical education, recess and other physical activity breaks; and before and after school activities.

A. Physical Education

1. All students in grades K-8 will participate in physical education in order to meet the Physical Education Standards.
2. P.E. classes will have the same student/teacher ratio used in other classes, and shall not exceed an average of 30 to 1 whenever possible.
3. The P.E. program shall provide adequate space and equipment to ensure quality physical education for students
4. P.E. will be taught by a licensed physical education instructor.

5. All staff involved in P.E. will be provided opportunities for professional development focusing on physical activity, fitness, health, and wellness.
6. All staff will refrain from using physical activity as punishment

B. Recess and Physical Activity

1. The school shall provide daily physical activity in accordance with Indiana Code 20-30-5-7.5.
2. All students will have at least one period of active recess per day that is at least 20 minutes long, will be outdoors when possible, and if not possible, teachers will provide an indoor physical activity break in the classroom.
3. All teachers will be encouraged to use physical activity breaks during classroom time as often as possible and implement strategies of learning while moving
4. Extended periods of inactivity (2+ hours) will be discouraged.
5. Intramurals, clubs, and sports will be offered before/after school.
6. School spaces and facilities will be made available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, including weekends and vacations for arranged sports and club related activities.

VI. Staff Wellness

Discovery Charter School supports the health and well-being of our staff by creating and promoting policy and environmental supports to provide physical activity and healthy eating opportunities.

A. Nutrition and Physical Activity

1. The school will promote programs to increase knowledge of physical activity and healthy eating for faculty and staff.
2. The school will work with local fitness centers to offer reduced membership fees.
3. School will allow staff to use school facilities outside of school hours for activities such as group fitness classes, walking programs, and individual use.
4. Staff will be encouraged to participate in community walking, bicycling, or running events.
5. Staff teachers' lounge will contain at least 50% healthy choices.
6. At least 50% of the food options available at staff meetings will meet the approved nutrition standards. During meetings lasting longer than one hour, staff will have the opportunity to stretch and be physically active.
7. Schools will promote breastfeeding by making reasonable efforts to provide a private location for employees to express breast milk, in accordance to Indiana Code 22-2-14-2.

VII. Evaluation

Discovery Charter School is committed to enforcing the policies and guidelines included in this document. Through implementation of the School Wellness Policy, the school will create an environment that supports opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating behaviors. To ensure

continuing progress, the corporation will evaluate implementation efforts and their impact of students and staff.

A. Implementation and Data Collection

1. The school will use an evidence-based assessment tool to track the collective health of students over time by collecting data such as body composition (height and weight), aerobic capacity, and/or muscular strength, endurance and flexibility.
2. The assistant principal shall be the point of contact and ensure that their school is in compliance with the wellness policy each school year, by assessing wellness implementation strategies.
3. The evaluation of the wellness policy and implementation will be directed by the Wellness Committee.
4. Policy language will be assessed each year and revised as needed.