

**Maria Montessori Academy**  
**Policy: Wellness Policy**  
**Adopted: July 22, 2011**



**Purpose**

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure the best possible mental and physical health environment for the students of Maria Montessori Academy (the “School”). The School’s Board of Directors (the “Board”) recognizes that the link between nutrition, physical activity and learning is well documented. Healthy eating and activity patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth, and lifelong health and wellbeing. Healthy eating and physical activity are essential to reduce risk for many chronic diseases. Schools have a responsibility to help students learn, establish and maintain lifelong healthy eating and activity patterns. Well planned and effectively implemented school nutrition and fitness programs have been shown to enhance students’ overall health as well as their behavior and academic achievement in school. Staff wellness also is an integral part of a healthy school environment, since school staff can be daily role models for healthy behaviors.

**Policy**

**Goal:**

All students in the School shall possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make nutritious food choices and enjoyable physical activity choices through their lifetime. All staff in the School are encouraged to model healthful eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

To meet this goal, the School adopts this school wellness policy with the following commitments to nutrition education, physical activity, nutrition guidelines, other school-based activities and implementations. This policy is designed to effectively utilize School and community resources to equitably serve the needs and interests of all students and staff, taking into consideration differences in culture.

**Nutrition Education:**

The School will promote nutrition education as follows:

- The School cafeteria or eating area serves as a learning laboratory to support nutrition education through menu offerings and signage.
- The School will provide education for students to help them learn skills needed to practice lifelong healthy eating.
- The classroom, cafeteria and other School venues provide clear and consistent messages that explain and reinforce healthy eating and physical activity habits.
- Healthy eating habits will be taught and supported for students and staff by encouraging teachers, whenever possible, to use healthy nutrition facts in learning skills such as reading, writing and math.
- Food will not be allowed to be used as a punishment or reward; however, nutrition education will be provided and nutrition incentive programs will be encouraged.
- Nutritional and physical awareness and healthy lifestyles will be promoted through assemblies that may include gymnastics, dance or other physical activities.

- Promote awareness of healthy lifestyles by encouraging, for example, regular medical and dental checkups.
- Promote safety in and out of the home by partnering with local law enforcement and other public safety personnel.
- Encourage nutrition education not only in health but also in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences and elective subjects.
- Encourage and educate parents in ways to provide healthy and affordable sack lunches.

**Promotion of Healthy Eating and Nutrition Guidelines:**

The School will strive to promote healthy eating through the following guidelines:

- Encourage the increased consumption of a variety of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains; and encourage decreased consumption of highly processed foods.
- Only offer food and beverages outside the lunch meal service that are a good source of nutrients, moderate in sodium, moderate or low in fat, and low in sugar that is not naturally occurring in the food, and moderate in calories.
- Strive to improve student nutrition behaviors on the school campus by: including an increase of healthier meal choices by students, including fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Serve school meals that meet or exceed the USDA nutrition standards for all meals as well as provide sufficient choices, including new foods and foods prepared in new ways to meet the taste preferences of the students.
- Designated lunch periods for all students will offer sufficient time to enjoy eating healthy foods. Lunch periods will be scheduled near the middle of the school day.
- Students shall be encouraged to test healthy food items that they are not familiar with to promote behavior change and healthy school meal consumption.
- Support healthy eating by utilizing the food service area as a learning laboratory to support classroom instruction through menu offerings and signs supporting healthy eating.
- Provide students opportunities to practice healthy habits by promoting relaxed and comfortable surroundings for eating and to enjoy daily physical activity.
- Guidelines for meals served as part of the School's school lunch program will not be less restrictive than the regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to subsections (a) and (b) of section 10 of the Child Nutrition Act (42 U.S.C. § 1779) and sections 9(f)(1) and 17(a) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. § 1758(f)(1), (1766(a))).

**Physical Activity:**

The School will promote physical activity as follows:

- Ensure that every student receives regular, age-appropriate, quality physical education.

- Provide within the school environment safe, enjoyable activities for all students.
- Provide, through physical education, safe and satisfying physical activities for all students,
- Provide for fitness education and assessment to help students understand and improve or maintain their physical well-being.
- Promote the benefits of regular physical activity now and throughout life.
- Ensure that physical activity facilities on school grounds are kept safe and well maintained.
- When activities such as mandatory testing or inclement weather make it necessary for students to stay indoors for long periods of time, students will be given periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to participate in some activity or movement.
- Appropriate alternative activities should be provided for students with physical disabilities.
- Exemptions from physical activities should be provided where appropriate for ill or injured students.

#### **Staff as Role Models:**

The School will encourage staff to serve as positive role models to students as follows:

- Train staff to supervise student-dining areas to encourage healthy eating patterns.
- Offer opportunities and encouragement for staff to model healthy eating habits.
- Develop strategies for teachers, administrators, students, foodservice professionals, and community members to serve as role models in practicing healthy eating and being physically active.

#### **Food Safety/Food Security:**

- All foods made available will comply with state and local food safety and sanitation regulations.
- Implement Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plans and guidelines to prevent food illness in school.
- All food service equipment and facilities must meet applicable local and state standards concerning health, safe food preparation, handling and storage, drinking water, sanitation and workplace safety.

#### **Food Guidelines:**

The purpose of these guidelines is to support the School's wellness policy and the Montessori philosophy, specifically in the classroom. The board wants to promote a healthy classroom environment for every student, with as few distractions as possible to the learning process. This will be supported in the following ways:

- Food will be allowed in the classrooms in support of the lesson plans.
- No soda or energy drinks will be allowed in the school.

- Some healthy snack choices may be offered to students and faculty. A healthy snack list will be provided to parents and guardians.
- Food will not be included in celebration of life (birthday) celebrations.

Signature:

---

Preston Allen, Vice Chair

Date