

Torah Institute of Baltimore

Local Wellness Policy

Preface

In accordance with 7 CFR 210.31(c), a Local Education Agency that participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or School Breakfast Program (SBP) must establish a Local School Wellness Policy for all schools under its jurisdiction. As of June 30, 2017, Local Wellness Policies must meet the minimum requirements set forth in the Final Rule: Local School Wellness Policy Implementation Under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

Local Wellness Policies are a valuable tool in the promotion of student health and wellness through the NSLP and SBP. Schools play an essential role in preparing students for successful futures, and proper nutrition and physical activity are key to creating constructive learning environments. Local Wellness Policies provide guidance to further support schools efforts to provide students with a successful and healthy future.

Coordinated School Health Council Members

Dr. Suzanne Insel, Administrator

Contact: 410-654-3500 scotter@torahinstitute.org

Meira Portnoy, Parent, Office Staff

Yonatan Datsenko, Parent, Program Coordinator

Contact: 410-654-3500 ext. 1085 ydatsenko@torahinstitute.org

Penina Katz, Parent, Food Service Coordinator

Michelle Mond, Parent, Lunch Service Coordinator

Fayge Hackerman, Parent, President of PTA

Racheli Daniel, Parent, President of PTA

Tehilah Guttman, Parent, Hot Lunch Volunteer

Dina Datsenko, Parent, Hot Lunch Volunteer

Temima Edelman, Parent, Hot Lunch Volunteer

Wellness Policy Committee

Responsibilities

Public Involvement

The Local Education Agency permits and encourages public involvement in Local Wellness Policy development, implementation, updates, and reviews. Therefore, the LEA shall invite a variety of stakeholders within the general public to participate in Local Wellness Policy processes.

Wellness Policy is available on the school website, <https://torahinstitute.org/parent-resources>.

Parents will have the opportunity to provide feedback to the Wellness Policy Coordinator through email, phone, or direct contact.

Nutrition education resources will be provided to parents/guardians through handouts, website links, school newsletters, presentations and any other appropriate means available to reach parents/guardians.

The school wellness committee will conduct, at a minimum, meetings four times a year. Agenda will include assessment of compliance with wellness policies, areas requiring improvement, and assess involvement of teachers, students, and community members.

Assessments

Under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, assessments of the Local Wellness Policy must occur no less than every three years. Torah Institute of Baltimore shall conduct assessments of the Local Wellness Policy every 3 years, beginning in 2017 and occurring every 3 years thereafter. These assessments will:

- Ensure the wellness policy is in compliance with USDA, State, and Local rules and regulations
- Compare the LEA's wellness policy to model wellness policies
- Measure the progress made in achieving the goals as outlined in the LEA's wellness policy

Updates

The Wellness Policy Committee must update the Local Wellness Policy as appropriate in order to fit the needs and goals of the Local Education Agency. The LEA shall make the following available to the public:

- The Local Wellness Policy, including any updates to the policy, on a yearly basis

- The triennial assessment, including progress toward meeting the goals outlined in the wellness policy

Through the following channels:

- Present on the school website

- Invitation to the parent body via email to view the Wellness Policy

The evaluation of the wellness policy and implementation will be directed by the Coordinated School Health Advisory Council and will be responsible for the three-year assessment of each school's compliance with the policy and its regulations. The three-year assessment must measure the implementation of this policy and its regulations; the extent to which each school is in compliance with the policy; the extent this policy compares to other model school wellness policies; and progress made in attaining the goals of the wellness policy. Policy and regulation language will be assessed each year and revised as needed.

The Wellness Policy Coordinator shall distribute information at the beginning of the school year to families of school children, include information in the student handbook, and post the wellness policy on the Corporation's website, including the assessment of the implementation of the policy prepared by the Corporation.

The Wellness Policy Coordinator shall also be responsible for informing the public, including parents, students and community members, on the content and implementation of this policy.

Records

The Local Education Agency shall maintain record of the Local Wellness Policy. This includes keeping a copy of the current wellness policy on file and maintaining documentation of the following actions:

- The most recent assessment of the policy

- Availability of the wellness policy and assessments to the public

- Reviews and revisions of the policy, including the individuals involved and the efforts made to notify stakeholders of their ability to participate in the process

Nutrition

The Local Education Agency 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.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 18.5 percent of the nation's youth was considered obese in 2015-16. This percentage increased 1.3 percent when compared to the previous year. Conversely, 15.7 percent of American families experienced food hardship in 2017. Through participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's School Nutrition Programs, the LEA commits to serving nutritious meals to students in order to prevent both overconsumption of nutrient-poor foods and food insecurity to give students the best chance to succeed inside and outside the classroom.

Nutrition Standards

Meals

All reimbursable meals served for the purposes of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) must meet or exceed USDA nutrition standards and regulations. This includes meeting standards for each of the meal pattern components (i.e. Grains, Meat/Meat Alternates, Fruits, Vegetables, and Milk) as well as meeting or exceeding the limitations set for calories, sodium, saturated fat, and trans fat.

All meals consist of a grain, fruit, vegetable, meat or meat alternative, and milk or water.

Water is available at every meal and throughout the day. Juice is not used to meet a fruit requirement or provided during meals.

Schools will make an effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. The National School Lunch Program is extended to all children enrolled in the Torah Institute of Baltimore for the 2023-2024 school year.

Information is sent to parents prior to the beginning of the school year regarding eligibility for free or reduced meals and how to apply for them

Students will have a minimum of 20 seated minutes available to eat their meal

Nutrition educators will partner with school staff of the school food service program to use the cafeteria as a learning lab. Healthy items, such as vegetables and fruits, will be displayed prominently in cafeterias to make healthier choices more appealing.

In elementary schools, nutrition education will be integrated at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based health education curriculum that meets state and national standards

All health education teachers will provide opportunities for students to practice or rehearse the skills taught through the health education curricula.

Foods of minimal nutritional value, including brands and illustrations, shall not be advertised or marketed in educational materials.

Schools shall schedule mealtimes so there is minimum disruption by bus schedules, recess, and other special programs or events.

Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias.

Local foods are served when available.

White milk is placed in front of the coolers to increase selection

Fruits and vegetables are usually pre-portioned to increase ease of selection

Correct portion size is reviewed with lunch room staff

Lunch area is frequently cleaned throughout the period

Other Foods and Beverages

We do not sell food or beverages to the students during the school day or any time before or after. If any food or beverage were to be sold they would meet or exceed the Maryland Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School and the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

All foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the Maryland Nutrition Standards for All Food Sold in School and the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

The following policy refers to all foods and beverages provided, but not sold to students. The Local Education Agency will prohibit the use of food as a reward or as part of a celebration. Providing alternatives to food as a reward promotes healthier habits by reducing exposure to less nutritious food items and, therefore, the amount of calorie-dense food items consumed (e.g. cakes, cookies, candy, etc.). This helps children develop improved food preferences and hunger cues to carry them throughout life. Instead, schools will implement the following methods for rewards and celebrations:

A wide variety of healthy, alternative rewards are used to provide positive reinforcement for children's behavior and academic performance.

Teachers provide prizes such as collectors cards, educational toys, stress relieving toys or small toy items as part of a reward system

Teachers encourage increased physical activity with extra recess or gym time as part of an incentive program

Teachers allow students to earn points towards participation in a class or school trip as part of incentive programs

Students will have access to free palatable drinking water during the school day.

Teachers may offer the option of student water bottles at the student desk

School cafeteria staff will be hired with the understanding that they are responsible to adhere to the policies the school has in place.

There are no foods or beverages sold outside of the Child Nutrition Program.

Students will have access to free potable drinking water during the school day.

Vending machines that dispense food or beverages will not be accessible to any student.

The school will try to limit celebrations that involve food.

The school will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers:

School Party / Snack Ideas

100% Fruit/Vegetable Juice

Water/Flavored Water (calorie-free)

Low-fat or fat-free Milk

Fresh fruit assortment

Fruit and cheese kabobs

Fruit w/ whipped topping

100% fruit snacks

Vegetable trays

Cheese-cubes, string cheese

Pretzels

Low-fat popcorn

Graham crackers

Animal crackers

Angel food cake – plain or topped with fruit

Low-fat pudding

Low-fat yogurt or parfaits

Trail/Cereal Mixes or Bars

Nuts, seeds

Apple Slices with honey

Dried Fruit

Squeezable Applesauce

Pure Fruit Popsicles

Bananas and/or strawberries with semi-sweet chocolate chips or chocolate syrup (let kids slice the bananas with plastic knife). Cereals that contain whole grains and are low in sugar. Trail mix (made from things like dried fruits, pretzels, mini chocolate chips and nuts)

Treats for birthdays and classroom parties:

Popcorn cups: Have your child help decorate plain 12-oz. paper cups with stickers, glitter glue or his photo, and then fill with homemade popcorn. Alternatively, decorate small paper bags or purchase theater-style popcorn boxes or bags.

Yogurt parfaits: In clear plastic cups, alternate layers of your child's favorite yogurt and fresh fruit such as blueberries, strawberries or mangos. Top with a cupcake topper.

Mini muffins: Carrot, blueberry and banana are all great choices. Use all or part whole-wheat flour or add ground flaxseeds for a nutritional boost. *Fresh fruit served in cupcake wrappers, waffle cones or waffle bowls.

Guacamole: Mash avocado, squeeze on fresh lime juice, then mix in chopped tomatoes, diced red onions and a smattering of sea salt. Serve with multi grain chips and veggie sticks (celery, carrots and red peppers)

Berries with fresh whipped cream:

Fruit kabobs with vanilla yogurt dip: strawberries, blueberries, pineapple, kiwi, grapes, and melon, for example—and assemble colorful fruit kabobs.

Magic fruit wands: Similar to fruit kabobs but made to look like a magic wand, with a whimsical star fruit at the top.

Nutrition Education

The Local Education Agency shall include nutrition education within the health education curriculum and integrate nutrition education into other core subjects, as appropriate. Various grade levels and curriculums shall use nutrition education information, research, and materials from the following resources:

Nutrition education is designed and implemented to help students learn nutrition knowledge, including but not limited to, the benefits of healthy eating, essential nutrients, nutritional deficiencies, the use and misuse of dietary supplements, safe food preparations, handling and storage, caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/ exercise), and adequate fruits and vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy.

Nutrition education is designed and implemented to help students learn nutrition related skills, including but not limited to, planning a healthy meal, understanding and using food labels, critically evaluating nutrition information, misinformation, and commercial food advertising.

Nutrition education will reinforce lifelong balance, emphasizing the link between caloric intake (eating) and exercise in ways that are age-appropriate.

Nutrition curriculum is developed in coordination with school administrators Curriculum will include nutritional education for grades 1-8. Curriculum will be cross-curriculum and include math (calculating grams of sugar in a food; reading a pie chart;) , science (understanding function of nutrition and its effect on the body; studying the digestive system), social studies (studying the development of nutrition through history; analyzing news articles discussing nutritional development; educating students to be nutritional advocates), and art (participating in a drawing contest demonstrating the food groups; designing posters that display MyPlate nutritional distribution; participating in dramatic or musical presentations about nutrition).

Nutrition program will provide activities that are grade appropriate for teachers to incorporate into their classrooms

Nutrition education will be cross-curriculum and included in grades 1-8. It will be included heavily in science education but will be a part of math, social studies, and art education as well.

Nutrition Promotion

The Local Education Agency shall implement nutrition promotion techniques through multiple channels, including the cafeteria, classroom, and home.

The Local Education Agency shall make cafeteria menus and nutrition information available through the following platforms: cafeteria menus are available on the school website and are sent home via email.

Marketing

The Local Education Agency will prohibit the marketing and advertising of all foods and beverages that do not meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards on the school campus (i.e. locations on the school campus that are accessible to students) during the school day (i.e. the midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the school day). The marketing standards described above apply, but are not limited to, oral, written, and graphic statements made for promotional purposes. Items subject to marketing requirements include, but are not limited to, posters, menu boards, vending machines, coolers, trash cans, scoreboards, and other equipment. This policy does not require schools to immediately replace equipment that does not meet this requirement, however, the Local Education Authority shall implement these standards as equipment needs replacement in the future.

Nutrition education and wellness will be offered to students, parents, and staff, through healthy eating handouts consistent with current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans. School faculty and staff model healthy eating behaviors to students during school hours.

Physical Activity

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. Torah Institute recognizes this connection and commits to promoting and providing opportunities for physical activity during and outside the school day.

Physical movement is included in the daily schedule with gym time in 3 20 minute increments spread out over the course of most days.

Other Opportunities for Physical Activity

Middle school students will be given the opportunity to exercise prior to the beginning of each school day. Weather permitting; students will have access to the playing fields on the upper level school grounds.

The following activities that promote healthful behaviors (and are therefore allowable) will be encouraged:

Move More and Other Ideas

Provide an extra recess

Celebrate all monthly birthdays with an open gym celebration!

Go for a class walk or hike around the school campus

Turn on some music and dance!

Play a class game of kickball

Have extra art or music time

Take the class to the library

Plan a thematic craft for the party

Party games are always a hit! Have a scavenger hunt where children look for school supply items in their classroom or on the playground.

Take a field trip to the local zoo, skating rink, or museum

Bring in a music specialist to encourage movement.

Put together a "goody bag" of non-edible treats such as glow sticks, balloons, stickers