

# Richmond Consolidated School's Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition

## Preamble

Whereas, children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;

Whereas, good health fosters student attendance and education;

Whereas, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity;

Whereas, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States, and major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood;

Whereas, 33% of high school students do not participate in sufficient vigorous physical activity and 72% of high school students do not attend daily physical education classes;

Whereas, only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from the Food Guide Pyramid;

Whereas, nationally, the items most commonly sold from school vending machines, school stores, and snack bars include low-nutrition foods and beverages, such as soda, sports drinks, imitation fruit juices, chips, candy, cookies, and snack cakes;

Whereas, school districts around the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling constraints; and

Whereas, community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Thus, **Richmond Consolidated School** is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of **Richmond Consolidated School** that:

- Foods and beverages sold or 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 affordable, 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, all schools in our district will participate in available federal school meal programs, national school lunch programs, and fruit and vegetable snack programs.
- 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 with related community services.

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

### **I. School Health Committee**

The school district will create, strengthen, or work within the existing school health committee to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The committee also will serve as resources to the school for implementing those policies.

### **II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus**

#### **School Meals**

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast 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;
- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;
- Serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- Ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.

The school should engage students through taste-tests of new entrees and surveys, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices.

**Free and Reduced-priced Meals.** **Richmond Consolidated School** will make every 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. Toward this end, **Richmond Consolidated School** utilizes electronic identification and payment systems; provide meals free of charge to all qualifying children; promotes the availability of school meals to all students.

**Meal Times and Scheduling. Richmond Consolidated School:**

- Will provide students with at least 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- Should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- Should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- Will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- Should 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.** Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of **Richmond Consolidated School's** responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs should 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.** **Richmond Consolidated School** should discourage 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.

**Elementary School/Middle School.** The **Richmond Consolidated School** food service program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students in the elementary and middle school level. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food in elementary school should be sold as balanced meal. If available, foods and beverages sold individually should be limited to low-fat and non-fat milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables. If juice is offered it must be 100% fruit juice.

**Fundraising Activities.** To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities which will have a balance of foods that meet nutritional and portion size. When possible schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. **Richmond Consolidated School** will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities.

**Snacks.** Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruit and vegetable choices as the primary snacks and water, juice,

and low-fat milk as the primary beverage. Snack provided by the school should provide a variety of choices for our students to choose from. If there is a snack choice that contains added sugar the student is allowed to choose one and then if still hungry they will have to choose from vegetables, fruit, a cheese stick or another healthy choice that has no added sugar. **Richmond Consolidated School** will assess if and when to offer snacks based on the timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations.

**Rewards.** **Richmond Consolidated School** will not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above), as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment. All celebrations including food will be done on the designated day per month as noted below.

**Celebrations.** **Richmond Consolidated School** should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one celebration per class per month. Each celebration should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above). The district will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

Any celebration involving a food item that does not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually will be accompanied by a nutritional alternative; i.e. fruits, vegetables, and/or cheese and crackers. Celebrations for Richmond Consolidated School should happen only on the designated celebration date noted in the student handbook and newsletters. The celebration will occur during snack time in the cafeteria. Food should only be consumed in the cafeteria for grades 1-8.

All parents will be notified before the date of any celebration where food will be brought in to be shared with the class.

**School-Sponsored Events** (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances). When possible, foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day will meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (above).

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

**Nutrition Education and Promotion.** **Richmond Consolidated School** aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is offered at 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;

- Is part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- 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);
- Links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;
- Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; and
- Includes training for teachers, staff and the RCS Community on but not limited to:

Yoga, Healthy Kids Week activities, Tick Education, Nutritional and Physical Education

**Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting.** For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

- 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, our Creative Arts Program; and
- Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

**Communications with Parents.** **Richmond Consolidated School** will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The school will offer healthy eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, and post menus on the school websites. The school should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages. The school will provide

parents a list of foods that meet the district's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities. In addition, the school will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

The school will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, and special events.

**Staff Wellness.** **Richmond Consolidated School** 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.

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

**Daily Physical Education (P.E.) K-8.** All students in grades K-8, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive daily physical education or its equivalent of 90 minutes/week for elementary school students and 90 minutes/week for middle school students for the entire school year. All physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher.

(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 elementary school students will have at least 25 minutes a day of supervised recess and all middle school students will have at least 10 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.

Schools should discourage extended periods (*i.e.*, periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active or have 15 minutes of supervised activity in the gym or outside before and after testing.

**Physical Activity Opportunities After School.** **Richmond Consolidated School** hosts the Richmond Recreation sports teams after school. These include the following fall, winter, and springtime sports; Soccer, Basketball, and Baseball. **Richmond Consolidated School** offers a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.

**Physical Activity and Punishment.** Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment.

**Safe Routes to School.** Due to the location of the school there are no walkers. All children use buses or alternate transportation via parental set-up.

**Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours.** School spaces and facilities should be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations. These spaces and facilities also should be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times. Students should be supervised at all times by a staff member during school hours or a adult supervisor after school hours.

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

**Monitoring.** The superintendent or designee will ensure compliance with established school-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. In **Richmond Consolidated School**, the principal or designee will ensure compliance with those policies and will report on the school's compliance to the school district superintendent or designee.

School food service staff, at the school, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the superintendent (or if done at the school level, to the school principal). In addition, **Richmond Consolidated School** will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes. If the **Richmond Consolidated School** has not received a SMI review from the state agency within the past five years, **Richmond Consolidated School** will request from the state agency that a SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible.

**Policy Review.** To help with the initial development of the **Richmond Consolidated School's** wellness policies, **Richmond Consolidated School** will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies. The results **Richmond Consolidated School** assessment will be compiled to identify and prioritize needs.

Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the **Richmond Consolidated School** will review their nutrition and physical activity policy; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. **Richmond Consolidated School**, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policy and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.