

Vista Maria’s Wellness Policy

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Vista Maria and Clara B. Ford Academy

School Wellness Policy

Preamble

Vista Maria and Clara B. Ford Academy (CBF) are committed to the optimal development of every student. The District believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental and social success, we need to create positive, safe and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism and better performance on cognitive tasks.^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students.^{8,9,10} In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education and extracurricular activities – do better academically.^{11,12,13,14} Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance.^{15,16,17}

This policy outlines the District's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students in the District have access to healthy foods throughout the school day – both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus– in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Students have opportunities to be physically active before, during and after school;
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of the District in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits.

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I. School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

The District will convene a representative district wellness committee (hereto referred to as the Nutrition Work Group (NWG) or work within an existing school health committee) that meets at least three times per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of this district-level wellness policy (heretofore referred as “wellness policy”).

The NWG membership will represent the secondary schools, (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: parents and caregivers; students; representatives of the school nutrition program (e.g., school nutrition director); physical education teachers; health education teachers; school health professionals (e.g., health education teachers, school health services staff [e.g., nurses, physicians, dentists, health educators, and other allied health personnel who provide school health services], and mental health and social services staff [e.g., school counselors, psychologists, social workers, or psychiatrists]; school administrators (e.g., superintendent, principal, assistant principal), school board members; health professionals (e.g., dietitians, doctors, nurses, dentists); and the general public.

Leadership

The Superintendent or designee(s) will convene the NWG and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy and will ensure each school's compliance with the policy.

The designated official for oversight is Meredith Reese, Chief Integrated Behavioral Health Officer

The names, titles, and contact information of the individual that comprise the NWG are:

Name	Title / Relationship to the School or District	Email address	Role on Committee
Carolynn Metz	Clinical Director	cmetz@vistamaria.org	Executive Owner
Haylen Steffan	Director of Dining Services	hsteffan@vistamaria.org	Member
Carrie Templer	Health Service Manager	ctempler@vistamaria.org	Member
Becky Hermann	Senior Manager of Activities and Academic Support	rhermann@vistamaria.org	Lead Member
Dr. Tiffney Widner	General Pediatrician	Twidner@vistamaria.org	Member

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Vickie Tyler	Director of Access and Family Engagement	vt Tyler@vistamaria.org	Executive Owner
Noelle Chatman	Chef, Chartwells Dining Services	nchatman@vistamaria.org	Member
Donetta Mathis	Licensed Practical Nurse	dmathis@vistamaria.org	Member
Allison Mitchell	Resident District Manager, Chartwells Dining Services	Allison.mitchell@compass-usa.com	Member
Melania Jenkins	Quality Manager	mjenkins@vistamaria.org	Member
Rachael Druyor	Director of Quality	rdruyor@vistamaria.org	Member

Each school will designate a school wellness policy coordinator, who will ensure compliance with the policy. Refer to Appendix A for a list of school-level wellness policy coordinators.

II. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring and Accountability

Implementation Plan

The District will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions and timelines specific to each school; and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where and when; as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.

This wellness policy and the progress reports can be found at: www.vistamaria.org.

Recordkeeping

The District will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy on *[District's central computer network]*. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public;
- Documentation of efforts to review and update the Local Schools Wellness Policy; including an indication of who is involved in the update and methods the district uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate on the NWG;

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- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements;
- The most recent assessment on the implementation of the local school wellness policy;

Annual Notification of Policy

The District will actively inform families and the public each year of basic information about this policy, including its content, any updates to the policy and implementation status. The District will make this information available via the district website and/or district-wide communications.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, the District will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

- The extent to which schools under the jurisdiction of the District are in compliance with the wellness policy;
- The extent to which the District's wellness policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model wellness policy; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the District's wellness policy.

The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is Carolynn Metz, Clinical Director.

The NWG, in collaboration with Clara B. Ford Academy, will monitor compliance with this wellness policy.

III. Nutrition

School Meals

Our school district is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams *trans* fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meeting the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

All schools within the District participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and the After School Snack Program. The District is committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students;
- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;

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- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (The District offers reimbursable school meals that meet [USDA nutrition standards](#).)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using at least ten of the following [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#):
 - Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chaffing dishes or hotel pans).
 - Sliced or cut fruit is available daily.
 - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students.
 - All available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names.
 - Daily vegetable options are bundled into all grab-and-go meals available to students.
 - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.
 - Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space decor and promotional ideas.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the [USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals](#). These school nutrition personnel will refer to [USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website](#) to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day* and throughout every school campus* (“school campus” and “school day” are defined in the glossary). The District will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. Students are also allowed to carry water bottles with them throughout the school day, and allowed to refill it as needed.

Additionally, the NWG have collaborated in expanding water consumption through the following methods: Fruited waters served at meals, a water tracking challenge, and limiting soda pop as a drink option for special events. Rather, water and zero sugar juice packets are provided more frequently than soda pop.

The District does not sell any meals outside of the NSBP and NSLP.

Fundraising- The District does not partake in Fundraising.

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. The District will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through at least:

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- Implementing at least ten or more evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#).

Nutrition Education

The District will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by all students. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is 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 integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences and elective subjects;
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);
- Provides special examples of low-calorie snack options and hands-on cooking demonstration of said examples.

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

The District will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 of the following essential topics on healthy eating:

- Relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Developing a healthy relationship with food that promotes weight loss and/or weight stabilization
- Food guidance from [MyPlate](#)
- Eating a variety of foods every day
- Balancing food intake and physical activity
- Eating more fruits, vegetables and whole grain products
- Choosing foods that are low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and do not contain *trans* fat
- Choosing foods and beverages with little added sugars
- Eating more calcium-rich foods
- Preparing healthy meals and snacks
- Risks of unhealthy weight control practices
- Accepting body size differences
- Food safety
- Importance of water consumption
- Importance of eating breakfast
- Making healthy choices when eating at restaurants
- Eating disorders
- [The Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#)
- Reducing sodium intake
- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to nutrition and dietary behavior
- How to develop a plan and track progress toward achieving a personal goal to eat healthfully
- Resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior
- Influencing, supporting, or advocating for others' healthy dietary behavior

IV. Physical Activity

Children and adolescents should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day.

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks or physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason

Physical Education

The District will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts (discussed in the “*Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education*” subsection). The curriculum will support the essential components of physical education.

All students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. The District will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

Health education will be required in all grades and the district will require middle and high school students to take and pass at least one health education course. The District will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 the following essential topics on physical activity:

- The physical, psychological, or social benefits of physical activity
- How physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- How an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease
- Developing a physical activity routine that encourages weight loss and/or weight stabilization
- Health-related fitness, that is, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition
- Differences between physical activity, exercise and fitness
- Phases of an exercise session, that is, warm up, workout and cool down
- Overcoming barriers to physical activity
- Decreasing sedentary activities, such as TV watching
- Opportunities for physical activity in the community
- Preventing injury during physical activity
- Weather-related safety, for example, avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia and sunburn while being physically active
- How much physical activity is enough, that is, determining frequency, intensity, time and type of physical activity
- Developing an individualized physical activity and fitness plan
- Monitoring progress toward reaching goals in an individualized physical activity plan
- Dangers of using performance-enhancing drugs, such as steroids
- Social influences on physical activity, including media, family, peers and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to physical activity and fitness
- How to influence, support, or advocate for others to engage in physical activity
- How to resist peer pressure that discourages physical activity.

Active Academics

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into “core” subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

The District will support classroom teachers incorporating physical activity and employing kinesthetic learning approaches into core subjects by providing annual professional development opportunities and resources, including information on leading activities, activity options, as well as making available background material on the connections between learning and movement.

Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Active Transport

The District will provide a safe walking route from the residential units to Clara B. Ford Academy and back to the residential units.

V. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

The District will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues and physical activity facilities. The District will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development and strong educational outcomes.

Through Vista Maria’s Journey to Success Team, the District is able to complement the well-being education provided by the Clara B. Ford Academy and Health Services teams. Current activities provided include, but are not limited to:

- step-aerobic dance classes
- basketball
- meditation and mindfulness
- volleyball
- swimming and water aerobics
- water tracking challenges
- healthy snacking workshops
- medical autonomy workshops
- Mindful eating workshops
- Self-love and self-care groups

Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement

The District will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families

will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

Glossary:

The District—the collective name for Vista Maria, Clara B. Ford Academy and Chartwells Dining Services. Representatives from each entity are represented in The District.

Extended School Day – the time during, before and afterschool that includes activities such as clubs, intramural sports, band and choir practice, drama rehearsals and more.

School Campus - areas that are owned or leased by the school and used at any time for school-related activities, including on the outside of the school building, school buses or other vehicles used to transport students, athletic fields and stadiums (e.g., on scoreboards, coolers, cups, and water bottles), or parking lots.

School Day – the time between midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.

Triennial – recurring every three years.

Appendix A: School Level Contacts

1. Michael Patterson, School Leader, Clara B. Ford Academy
2. Haylen Steffan, Director of Dining Services, Chartwells Dining Services
3. Brad Williams, Science, Physical Education and Health Teacher, Clara B. Ford Academy

Appendix B: Sources

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